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# THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN JESUS' DAY

by

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since man attained the realm of human intelligence he has had to face the problem of making a living. Since that time, too, he has for the most part, sought to solve this problem in terms of himself, his family, or his tribe. But recent world developments have forced man to seek a solution by some other method than selfish competition, or else he must perish. For this reason there is more interest in the world's present economic situation than at any other time in history. There is but one way for Christian people to approach this problem and that is from the standpoint of the principles of Jesus. In view of this fact we shall accept as our purpose in this thesis the seeking of a better understanding of the economic situation in Jesus' day and any possible effect that situation may have had upon Jesus as shown by his teachings.

The more animated interest in Economics as a modern world problem may be said to have had its beginning in the conditions leading up to the American and French Revolutions. The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century gave it impetus and its climax, reached in the world war, finally jolted the church at large into its sense of Christian responsibility.

# I

When the war began in 1914, it was, to the average man, a war between peoples but before its close in 1918 every man knew that he was fighting for principle. There had gradually emerged a great central issue and this issue Sherwood Eddy views from three standpoints: political, moral and spiritual. He continues: "Politically, there was the issue between autocracy and democracy, between the pretended divine right of kings and the eternal and inalienable rights of peoples. Morally, the issue lay between the oppression of militarism and human liberty. Spiritually, the final issue of the war lay betwwen the materialism of might and the spiritual power of right."[1]

While the three standpoints really constitute a single issue, this division does give us a more comprehensive way of judging the results of the war. What are the gains? With so few rulers left on their thrones we can safely say that politically the rights of the people have won, for the present at least, over the divine rights of kings. There are considerable moral gains also. A step toward human liberty was certainly taken in the establishment of the League of Nations. Further steps toward the relief of militaristic oppression were the Washington Conference for the Reduction of Armaments and - most progressive of all - the Protocol to the League, which provides for compulsory arbitration. But when we come to search for the gains of the spiritual over the material, or God over mammon, what is the evidence? On the surface it appears from the present

1 Everybody's World, p.7.

economic situation that the gains are all on the materialistic side. The capitalistic idea seems to predominate thruout the world. The United States, with a national wealth of two hundred and twenty eight billions,[1] is the richest country in the world. Public opinion would see no cause for alarm where all seems so prosperous and yet, within her boundaries, are ten million, living either in poverty or on the border line of the minimum subsistence level. We have a per capita wealth of $2012 but 38% of our working men receive less than a $1000 annual wage. The United States Bureau of Labor gives $2200 as a health and decency budget for a family of father, mother and three children, but 72% of our twenty one million families receive less than $1500 annual wage. It is the boast of some that our skilled workmen receive an average wage of from seventy-five cents to $1.25 per hour but the fact is usually overlooked that these same workmen are forced to remain idle from 20% to 25% of their time. For example, the Committee on Elimination of Waste in Industry of the Federated American Engineering Societies, which was appointed by Herbert Hoover, points out that "The building trades workman is employed only about 190 days in the year, or approximately sixty-five per cent of his time," showing a loss of time in this industry of thirty-five per cent of the working time. Tables prepared by the Interstate Commerce Commission

1 Everybody's World, p. 32.

show that in 1921 forty-eight per cent of the railroad employees received less than $1500 and during the past thirty years bituminous coal miners have averaged ninety-three idle working days per year. The cause is lack of production and proper distribution, but with our natural resources and sparse population in comparison with other countries, it would seem that such circumstances exist unnecessarily. To what then, or to whom, is due this waste in production? Naturally there would be some loss thru inefficiency but, referring again to the report of Mr. Hoover's committee of engineers quoted above, "over fifty per cent of the responsibility of these wastes can be placed at the door of management and less than twenty-five per cent at the door of labor." Too, capitalists often buy inventions to prevent them from falling into the hands of competitors and then refuse to use them. In addition, the management often destroys their goods in order to maintain prices at a given height thru lack of supply. The need of some solution of the problem is evident when we think of the above situation of the majority of our population on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the fact that there are more than four hundred and forty families in the United States who have incomes in excess of twenty millions and that sixty per cent of our sixty billions of capital wealth is controlled by only two per cent of the people.[1]

[1]The facts and figures regarding the situation in the United States, except where otherwise noted, are taken from Christianity and Economic Problems, edited by Kirby Page.

The above situation as noted is not by any means limited to our own country but may be found in an exaggerated form in most any other country of the world. The Sydney Bulletin in 1918 gave as the capitalized profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Great Britian as seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Yet this same company refused to increase the wages of their famished laborers three pence until they were forced to do so. C. F. Andrews points out that the rise of industrialism in India is producing Indian capitalists who are no whit less cruel and inhuman than are the European exploiters. He tells of being called in a short time ago by both parties to act as peacemaker in a labor dispute in Ahmadadad which concerned the fate of two hundred thousand poor people. The mill owners,who had made profits of from sixty to one hundred per cent during the past five successive years, because of a depression in the cotton market wanted to reduce the already small wages of their laborers twenty per cent. "Business is business" they said. They could not afford to run their mills at a loss. The negotiations broke down and after two months of misery bordering on starvation the bulk of the workers returned to work on a fifteen reduction of their previous wage.[1] Mr. K. M. Pannikar, graduate of Oxford and now professor of History at the Muslim University of Aligarh, in his Imperialism in Theory and Practice says that the British Government

1 Christ and Labor pp. 59-60

itself is in fact a "British Empire Company Limited, which like all other trade interests is concerned only in giving a maximum profit to its shareholders -------- Take the case of South Africa ------- Self Government in South Africa means merely the right to oppress and exploit."[1]

We might also give instances of the terrible conditions in China, Japan and other countries but we gave the situation in the United States and Great Britian because it is upon these countries, primarily, that the responsibility of this problem rests. But in the light of this situation as it exists today were there any gains made by the spiritual forces during and since the war other than already existed in the forms of labor organizations, Marxian Socialism and other "isms" grounded mainly on material bases? We claim there were! Concretely the Dawes Plan for Reparations drawn up in 1924 is a mighty outstanding instance. President Coolidge, in a speech at the White House, January 24, 1925, before delegates attending the conference on the causes and cures of war, said, "I believe that just as the armament conference was a timely and convincing cooperation on the political side, so the Dawes Plan was a similar timely and effective effort for rehabilitation on the economic side." But the Dawes Plan and all other concrete gains in the needed solution of our present economic problem must come, if permamently successful, thru the power of spiritual forces. The Christian Church has always sanctioned the system of capitalism with

1 Quoted by Andrews, op. cit. p. 117

its demoralizing speculation and excessive profits; this same spiritual power - awakened to its Christian responsibility - must solve the mammoth economic problem which confronts the world today, and it was this awakened interest of the Christian Church to the present need that was the great gain of the spiritual power of right over materialism in the last war.

It is this awakened interest in the need of a Christian solution of the present situation that has prompted this study of the economic situation in Jesus' day. He is the heart of the Christian solution of every problem. Therefore any possible effect that the situation in which he lived may have had upon him, as shown by his teachings, will be certain to throw some light upon our own problem.

We shall take up our study in the following order. First, we shall consider the geography of the Holy Land. This will include the physical contour of the land, the fertility of its soil, its climatic conditions, its waters, winds and temperature. Then we shall observe the natural resources of Palestine, its commerce and industries. This will lead to a consideration of its roads, imports and exports as well as its industrial and agricultural products. With this background we shall seek to classify the society in which our Lord mingled and to determine, as nearly as possible, its economic status. An attempt will be made also to discover if there were conflicts between the classes of his day, and if so, their causes. And finally in our

conclusion we shall ask ourselves what the effect of this situation must have been upon Jesus as shown by his teachings in the synoptic gospels. We shall limit ourselves to the Synoptics because, from the historical point of view, they are more authoritative than the remainder of the New Testament.

## II

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

The geography of a country always effects the nature and thinking of its people. The people of Mississippi, for instance, are by nature backward and think that anywhere else is better than their own state. But the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West would consider any one of their number as "beside himself" should he aver that there exists any other state, or even country, better than California. Who can say that it is not the geography of these states that causes the difference in their peoples? Likewise the nature and thinking of the people of Palestine must have been affected by its geography in the days of Jesus Christ.

Palestine is divided into four chief natural divisions. From Mount Carmel south along the Mediterranean Sea, including the plains of Philistia, is known as the Maritime Plain. The Central Plauteau reaches from the Lebanons in the north, with the exception of the break of the Plain of Esdraelon, to Beersheba in the south and gradually slopes from the mountains about Hebron in southern Judea down to the desert of the Negab south of Beersheba. The Jordan Valley, with its head lying at the feet of the Lebanons, has as its southern extremity, the lowlands about the Dead Sea; the Valley ranges from three to fourteen miles in width. The fourth division

is the plauteau east of the Jordan; it is shaped like a triangle with its angles at the foot of Mount Hermon, at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and at the Druze Mountains in the east looking out into the great Arabian Desert.

THE CLIMATE OF PALESTINE. The climate of the Holy Land is very similar to that of California. Both have a wide variety in altitude; both have the double exposure of the sea on the west and the desert on the east and thus both have the year divided into a rainy season and a dry season. The altitude of Palestine ranges from 1300 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea to 9000 feet above in the mountains to the north. The rainy season begins during the latter part of October and continues to the latter part of March or April. "When you see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, there cometh a shower and it is so",[1] is a statement of Jesus, showing that he had observed that it was the damp west and southwest winds coming in from the sea and dropping their moisture as they struck the cold mountains which caused the winter rains. It was likewise a west wind - this time more from the north west - that made the hot days of summer durable. George Adam Smith describes this wind as the traveller's welcome, unfailing friend from the sea.[2] In a note[3] he explains the reason for this wind rising morning by morning with such punctuality. The limestone soil heats faster than the sea, hence the wind off the sea increases in

1 Luke III:7
2 Historical Geography, p. 66
3 Ibid p. 67

strength until a little past noon and blows until sunset. Then all is left in perfect stillness until the cooling of the limestone begins. All thru the night the wind is reversed and comes from the opposite direction.

The other winds are much less frequent than the almost constant winds from the sea but they are much more disasterous and disagreeable. From the north a wind usually precedes the winter rains in October, bringing with it "a dry cold". But the Sherkiyeh, or east winds, blowing in from the desert -east, southeast and south - are the most disasterous. It was these hot winds that Jesus had in mind as he said, "When ye see the south wind blow, ye say there will be heat and it cometh to pass".[1] Again Smith,describing these winds, says, "They come with a mist of fine sand, veiling the sun, scorching vegetation and bringing languor and fever to men."[2] On the desert road up from Egypt they have been known to overwhelm whole caravans.

Due to the varying altitudes of Palestine, its opposing aspects "seaward and towards the desert", and its contrary winds we are not surprised at its wide difference in temperature - below freezing to above 105°. The mean annual temperature however is only from about 62° to 68° so for the most part the country has a temperate climate.

THE LAND AND ITS FERTILITY. We have seen that the year in Palestine is divided into a rainy season and

1 Luke XII:55
2 Historical Geography, P.67.

a dry season. During the five or six months rainy season the whole land gets a thoro soaking. Upland gorge and lowland valley are filled with roaring torrent, while plains like Esdraelon become in parts a quagmire. But the land in general is a porous limestone and these floods are soon drained away. Before summer is well under way the River Jordan and a few perennial streams, which in the hill country amount to only rills, are left to supply vegetation with the moisture necessary for its growth. In spite of this apparent destitution, except for the hills of Judea, Palestine is fairly well watered from springs near the hills and mountains and from wells on the plains. These sources of water supply and the fertility of the soil may best be described by taking up each of the different sections of the country in more detail. For this more minute, yet brief and definite, study we shall, in addition to the four general divisions mentioned above, make a further separate distinction of the smaller natural divisions.

The Maritime Plain may be divided into three portions. The northern portion, of twenty miles between Mount Carmel and the Crocodile River, is marshy. The middle section is the Plain of Sharon. This Plain, with very rich chocolate brown soil, in the north was woodland in the time of Jesus, but further south it produced grain, melons, orange and palm groves, gardens and coarse grass and was fertile thruout its entire length of forty-four miles. The third portion, south to the River of Egypt, was the Plain of Philistia which had much water and produced a few trees and a great deal of grain.

The Shephelah is a range of low hills separating the mountains of Judea from the Maritime Plain. These hills, with their northern expremity at Ajalon, are cut across from the Judean Hills to the sea by three or four gaps where well watered valleys of red alluvial soil produce great fields of corn. The slopes and glens of the hills between have a gray white soil where corn fields struggle for space and water but here the olive groves are finer than either on the plains or on the range above.

The Central Range including Esdraelon was the territory where Jesus spent the most of his life. For that reason we shall take up the political divisions along with the natural, emphasizing particularly Judea and Galilee.

Judea was a region fifty-five miles long from Bethel to Beersheba, by twenty-five miles wide from the Shephelah to the Jordan. About one half of this area was barren desert. the table land on the top of the range is limestone. Standing upon its surface one is overwhelmed always by the presence of that awful deep, into which he can see the intervening land sinking thru one softer formation after another, but whose bottom he cannot see. This limestone table land was of little value for agriculture but on the terraces and on the fertile spots here and there on its rugged breast grew chiefly the olive, the vine and the fig. Other fruits of Judea were the sycamore (fig), the carob, nuts and almonds, pomegranates, apples, apricots and mulberries[1] and on the plain around Jericho the fertile

[1]Smith, G. A., Jerusalem p.305.

groves and gardens of palms, balsam and vegetables,[1] and the waving fields of grain. This plain and the oasis of Engedi were the only well watered spots in Judea. About Engedi also grew reeds, brush, trees and grass, and a broad mile of gardens reaches to the sea.

Samaria lay between Judea on the south and Esdraelon on the north, between Sharon on the West and Jordan on the east. It was an area of open fertile valley, well watered, rich in spacious meadows and corn lands.

The Plain of Esdraelon extends from the Sea to the River Jordan but may be divided into the Plain of Acre, extending east nine miles, from the sea to where the northern hills almost meet Carmel; the Inland Plain, a triangular level with its angles at Tell el Kasis, Tabor and Jenin; and the long valley descending to the Jordan. The Inland Plain is really Esdrelon. It is twenty by fifteen by fifteen miles, and two hundred feet above the sea; it has a fertile soil of red and black loam with an abundance of water from springs which issue from the surrounding mountains. In the time of Jesus this Plain was a sea of waving wheat.

Galilee really includes Esdraelon and reaches north to the Litany River, west to the Phoenicia coast and east to the Jordan valley and the Lake of Gennesaret. For a clearer understanding, Galilee may be described in four sections. Esdraelon has already been described. The other three divisions are: Lower Galilee - from the northern

1 Smith, G. A., Historical Geography p. 266.

edge of Esdraelon north to the hills eighteen hundred and fifty feet above sea level or to an imaginary line from the Sea of Galilee, just north of Tiberias to the Maritime Plain; Upper Galilee - the territory between mountains two thousand and four thousand feet in altitude; and the upper Jordan Valley with its two lakes. Josephus says of Galilee, "The soil is so universally rich and fruitful and full of plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites, by its fruitfulness, the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation. Accordingly it is cultivated by its inhabitants and no part of it lies idle".[1] This is an exaggeration yet it is comparatively rich for Smith says that altho Galilee has but 4.16 centimetres heavier rainfall than Judea[2] a sufficient supply for the entire year was furnished by the Lebanons. This abundance of water means exuberant fertility in both Esdraelon and the Jordan Valley. Both Upper and Lower Galilee have a temperate climate and their fertility is evidenced by the variety of vegetation. Smith says that Tabor is covered with bush and on its northern side, with large loose groves of forest trees. In Lower Galilee he points out that the road from the Bay of Carmel to Nazareth winds among "open woods of oak and abundance of flowers and grass."[3] There is also found growing here a profusion of bush, scattered forest trees, holly-oak, maple, sycamore, baytree, myrtle, arlentus, sumac

1 Wars III 3.
2 Historical Geography Note p. 418.
3 Ibid p. 419.

and others, as well as great stretches of fat corn land. Upper Galilee is described as an "undulating tableland, arable, and everywhere tilled, with swelling hills in view all round covered with shrubs and trees."[1] All of the products mentioned as growing in Lower Galilee also grow here except, perhaps, the sycamore. In addition to those mentioned Josephus adds that the olive, the vine and the palm were chiefly cultivated.[2]

The Jordan Valley has already been mentioned but we shall here describe briefly each of four divisions. The River Jordan has four sources only two of which are mentioned by the ancients. The Tell el Kadi bursts from the west side of a sixty foot mound which protrudes a hundred yards out from the foot of Hermon. This stream is twelve feet broad and three feet deep where it gushes from the mound. Banias - thirty feet broad - bursts from a cavern of a cliff at the foot of Hermon, a little further north. The Upper Jordan Valley is marshy above Lake Huleh. This lake is thickly surrounded by swamps and jungles of papyrus reed. Upon leaving the lower end of Huleh, the Jordan falls below sea level. This is the beginning of the "Great Rift" which extends with a width of from two to fifteen miles far south of the Dead Sea. The valley below Huleh is fertile. It gradually falls six hundred and eighty feet in the next nine miles to the Sea of Galilee. This lake is twelve and one-half by eight miles with a thorny thistly moorland sloping to the north. To the north-west lies the fertile

1 Historical Geography p. 419.
2 Wars III, 3.

Plain of Gennesaret which is about four miles broad. Along the west coast the shore is narrow until it reaches the valley which is four miles south of the lake. Then, except at Khersa, on the east there is one-half mile of shore well watered and fertile! Josephus gives the best idea of the fertility of the plain of Gennesaret in our Lord's day. He says, "Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it - - - for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts, particularly walnuts which require the coldest air, flourish there in great variety. There are palm trees also which grow best in hot air; fig trees also and olives grow near them, which yet require air that is more temperate. One may call this place the ambition of nature, where it forces those plants which are usually enemies to one another to agree together. - - - It supplies men with the principles fruits with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together thru the whole year, for besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain."[1]

The Lower Jordan is the sixty-five miles of the Rift which lies between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea. It varies from three to fourteen miles in width and is for the most part of exuberant fertility. We have seen the products about Jericho and it was the same about Beth-

1 Wars III, 3.

Shan to the north. The whole of the west side of the valley was famed thruout the ancient world for its corn, dates, balsam, flax and other products.

The Dead Sea is fifty-three miles long, eight or ten miles wide and from eight to thirteen hundred feet deep making its bottom about twenty-six hundred feet below sea level. The cliffs come near the water's edge twice on the west side. El-Lisan, or the Tongue, in the shape of a spurred boot extends from the east shore to within three miles of the west side. Where the coast is flat there is neither no growth or briny swamps. A few thorn bushes of succulent weeds may grow higher up on the yellow scurfy soil of terraces.

The Eastern Range stretches for one hundred and fifty miles from Hermon in the north to Moab in the south. It varies in breadth from thirty to eighty miles in its extent from the Jordan Valley to the edge of the Desert. The average altitude is about two thousand feet and a temperate climate is the result. Four rivers furnish an abundant water supply. The Yarmuk, as large as the Jordan, the Jabbok, the Arab and the Arnon are fed by the snows and winter rains and the numerous springs. Luxuriant vegetation is almost universal and all agriculture is prosperous. Hauran, lying between Hermon and Yarmuk, has a rich volcanic soil the larger part of which is tilled for wheat and the rest is covered by thich herbage. The region between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok is known as Gilead. Its ridges are covered by forests; its valleys hold orchards of pomegranates, apricots and olives and there are many vineyards; its open

plains are fields and maize and its moors are rich in fragrant herbs. It was Gilead that produced the perfume and medicine for the whole Eastern world. To the south of Jabbok the forests gradually cease and Ammon and Moab are mostly high bare moors with a few jungles of bush. A fertile ten mile strip thru the center of Moab is cultivated for wheat but this region is most famous for its pasture. The King of Moab is called a sheep master and flocks and pasture have ever been the wealth, the charm and the temptation of eastern Palestine.

## III

## OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

How a people obtains its livelihood effects the character of the people perhaps more than the geography in which they live. While the natural environment may effect the physical features and habits of living, the mode of securing that living is a great determining factor in the mental and spiritual life. Consider a question C. F. Andrews asks regarding the industrialization of India. "Shall the ancient village life of India, which was so self-sufficing and so productive of plain living and high thinking, be broken up and its family life exposed to new and terrible risks, in order to provide cheap labor for centralized capitalistic exploitation?"[1] No one who has observed the Indian or studied his great literature will deny the fact of his deeply spiritual nature or the profoundness of his philosophy.

That the above question is being answered affirmatively and that the former conditions were more conducive to the spiritual and intellectual life may be inferred from the words of one of India's greatest spiritual leaders of today. At the time Mahatma Gandhi was being tried for passive resistance by the British Government, he said, "Before British advent India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement that she needed for adding to

1 Christ and Labor p. 113.

her meagre agricultural resources. The cottage industry, so vital to India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes. - - - I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the towndwellers in India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for their crime against humanity, which is perhaps unequalled in history."[1]

Again see the great soul of India expressed by that almost unparalleled mind of his type, Rabindranath Tagore, as he challenges the material power of the world and glories that his own dear nation has been accounted worthy to be humbled by God! We are told that Gandhi is more like Jesus of Nazareth than any other living being. Was Jesus not likely to have been deeply interested in the economic conditions of his own people? In this chapter then an endeavor will be made, by the use of whatever contemporary literature is available, to determine the manner in which the people of Palestine secured their livelihood at the time in which Jesus lived.

NATURAL RESOURCES. The source of the greatest wealth of the common people of Palestine came from the fertility of the soil. The fruits of the land, if such can be classed as natural resources, have been mentioned in the preceding chapter. In addition there was little else that was native. Josephus in his description of the Sea of Galilee says, "There are several kinds of fish in it

1. Quoted by Andrews, Christ and Labor p. 115f.

different both to the taste and to the sight from those elsewhere."[1] This is evidence that they were used for food. Josephus also tells of a certain substance which he calls "black clods of bitumen" that is cast up in "many parts" of the Lake Asphaltitis or the Dead Sea. He says these clods "swim at the top of the water and resemble, both in shape and in bigness, headless bulls." After explaining how the men gather it in ships he continues, "This bitumen is not only useful for the caulking of ships but for the curing of men's bodies; accordingly it is mixed in a great many medicines."[2] George Adam Smith also speaks of this bitumen which he defines as "Petroleum hardened by evaporation and oxidation". There is, too, "a bituminous limestone," called the Dead Sea stone about the Sea "from which articles are made and offered for sale in Jerusalem and Bethlehem."[3] Salt may have been native in Palestine to a certain extent. Smith describes a ridge of salt three hundred feet high which runs for five miles at the south-east end of the Dead Sea.[4] But this was no doubt usually in the hands of the Arabs who probably sold it in Jerusalem and other cities of the Holy Land. Someone else has pointed out that in the caves of Judea there was a slight scraping of salt that might be, and perhaps was, taken and used by the peasants. We are sure that in certain districts, at least, there were forests, or timber in Palestine but

1 Wars III, 10; 3 Historical Geography p. 501.

2 Ibid IV, 8; 4 Ibid p. 501.

as to how much there is no definite knowledge. Josephus points out that when the Romans under Vespasian invaded Galilee, the Jewish army, after a council of war had been held by the commanders, was ordered to "cut down all of the trees on the mountains"[1] that adjoined the city of Jatopata for a wall of defense. Smith again speaks of open woods of oak and "scattered forest trees" in Galilee and then quotes Robinson's description of the fertility of Upper Galilee as "an undulating tableland - - - with swelling hills in view all round, covered with shrubs and trees."[2] The upper end of the Plain of Sharon may also have been woodland but the references are not satisfactory. It may be said with certainty that there were some forests but it is impossible to know the extent or whether they were used in industry.

INDUSTRIES OF PALESTINE. Under the caption "industries" will be included all of the different kinds of employment practiced as a means of livelihood that do not have to do with the commerce with other peoples. This will embrace farming, the raising of cattle and sheep and fishing, which were the three chief occupations in Palestine in Jesus' day. While we shall rely upon the sources at least for reference to these vocations for evidence of their existence, later scholars will be followed for some of the descriptive and explanatory materials. Agriculture stands at the top of the list. Because the soil was fertile

1 Wars III, 7.
2 Historical Geography p. 419

and arable the nomads coming in from the desert had naturally settled around the springs and wells of the country and substituted houses for tents. This development may be observed thruout the entire history of the race and there is abundant evidence in the sources. The use of agricultural terms is noted first in the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, written about 190 B. C.

> "How shall he become wise that holdeth the plough,
> That glorieth in the shaft of the goad,
> - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
> He will set his heart upon turning his furrows;"[1]

What Josephus says concerning the universally rich and fruitful soil of Galilee "cultivated by the inhabitants" has already been quoted.[2] There are numerous agricultural terms found in the three synoptic gospels used by Jesus and his followers, for example, "the treasure hid in a field",[3] "But which of you having a servant plowing?"[4] "And it came to pass that he went thru the corn fields on the Sabbath Day; and his disciples began as they went to pluck the ears of corn."[5] These are sufficient references to establish the importance of agriculture without further speaking of the vine, the fig, and the olive. Both the vine and the fig are referred to in the discourses of Jesus, and from the third chief fruit the historical Mount of Olives received its name.

The raising of sheep and cattle ranked second, if not equal, to agriculture.

1 Ecclus. XXXVIII, 25-26;
2 Above, p. 15;
3 Matthew 13:44;
4 Luke 17:7.
5 Mark 2:23.

"How shall he become wise - - - - - -
That driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours,
And whose discourse is of the stock of bulls?
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
And his wakefulness is to give his heifers their fodder."[1]

This refernece from Ecclesiasticus is reinforced by others from the New Testament. When Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath "- - - he said to the ruler of the synagogue, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his os or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?"[2] Again,"Which of you having a servant - - - feeding cattle will say unto him by and by when he has come from the field, go and sit down to meat?"[3] Matthew twice has Jesus refer to the camel.[4] Whether any of these were raised in Palestine we cannot say. It is barely possible that there might have been a few herd east of the Jordan since the camel and the ass were used for travel and domestic purposes while the ox was used for sacrifice and in agricultural work. However doubtful the raising of cattle may be it is certain that sheep raising was an important occupation. The history of Israel both in ancient and modern times bears out the fact that the hill country of Judea and Gilead, as well as the other sections which were better for grazing purposes including Moab, the sheep country, all used their flocks of sheep and goats for both home consumption and as a medium of exchange for other necessary commodities. The law prescribed lambs without blemish for sacrifices; the prophets used the figure

1 Ecclus. XXXVIII, 25-26;
2 Luke 13:10f;
3 Luke 17:7.
4 Matthew 19:24, 23:24.

in referring to the coming Messiah; the people sung of the good shepherd and of the straying sheep in their psalms. The fact that John the Baptist points out Jesus as the Lamb of God and the many other references to the shepherds or or to their flocks are evidence that during Jesus' time the raising of sheep and goats was a most important occupation. Two or three quotations from the Gospels will suffice to show these statements true. "There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night."[1] Jesus, himself, made frequent use of like terms during his ministry. At the time he healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out?"[2] Again the parable of the lost sheep[3] and if quotations from the Gospel of John were permissible, there are numerous passages to be found there, as well as, in other parts of the New Testament.

The industry third in importance in Palestine was that of fishing. The Lake of Galilee was the scene of this activity. The location of the city of Taricheae, "the salting station"[4] on the Lake of Gennesaret is uncertain. It may have been three or four miles south of Tiberias and near the place where the River Jordan leaves the Lake but it was more probably near Mejdel. It is Strabo who tells that, "at the place called Taricheae the lake supplies the

1 Luke 2:8;
2 Matthew 12:11;
3 Matthew 18:12.
4 Strabo's Geography, XVI, 2, P 45.

best fish for curing."[1] Josephus, as quoted above,[2] refers to "several kinds of fish" in his description of the Lake of Gennesaret. There are other instances in the Gospels which verify the importance of the fishing industry in Jesus' day. Mackie explains that there were three principle ways of fishing: the casting net, which was thrown by the fisherman as he stood on the bank, the drag net, which was similar to our modern seines, and the hook.[3] Since Jesus made his home at Capernaum during the greater part of his ministry he had undoubtedly become familiar with the Lake and its environs during his earlier life. At least four of his disciples were fishermen and it was from their nets that he called Simon and Andrew, "for they were fishers, and Jesus saith unto them, come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men."[4] They were using casting nets. At the time Peter was asked for the tribute money by the taxgatherers at Capernaum Jesus told him to "cast an hook" and take the necessary coin from the mouth of the first fish that came up.[5] At another time during Jesus' ministry the crowd pressed upon him as he stood by the Lake of Gennesaret so he got into a ship, which happened to be Simon's, and taught the people from the ship. "When he had left off speaking he said unto Simon, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught - - - and when they had done so, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake."[6] This is evidence of the abundance of fish in the Lake. They

1 Strabo's Geography XVI,2,B 45; 4 Mark 1:16-17.
2 Page 21. 5 Matthew 17:27.
3 Bible Manners and Customs p.75; 6 Mark 5:4-6.

were used not only fresh but were cured and pickled. Smith says, "the pickled fish of Galilee were known thruout the Roman world."[1]

Many other forms of occupation must have been practiced in Jesus' day, but the details are lacking in the sources. So practically all that we shall endeavor to do here is to mention them with the evidence of existence. The carpenter is mentioned twice in the Gospels, once each by Mark and Matthew. Altho in connection with the same incident, it is mentioned in different terms which show that Jesus followed the occupation of his father just as was the custom for all Jewish boys. Jesus had come into his own country and was teaching in the synagogue. Those who heard him were astonished and said, according to Mark, "from whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judah and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."[2] This shows that Jesus himself was a carpenter. But Matthew says, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?"[3] The passage continues, referring to his brothers and his sisters, as did Mark. What the carpenter did is a conjecture but no doubt the work was the making of yokes and other such necessities of

1 Historical Geography p. 454.
2 Mark 6:1f.
3 Matthew 13:54f.

village life as many writers of imagination have pictured.

Jesus uses a parable of the merchant. "And the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls."[1] This infers that there were merchants who handled different lines of goods then as now. The character of the merchant may be seen by reading from Ecclesiasticus.

> "A merchant shall hardly keep himself from wrong doing;
> And a huckster shall not be acquitted of sin.
> Many have sinned for a thing indifferent;
> And he that seeketh to multiply gain will turn his eye away.
> A nail will stick fast between the joinings of stones;
> And sin will thrust itself in between buying and selling."[2]

> "Take not counsel - - - - - - - - - -
> - - with a merchant about exchange;
> Nor with a buyer about selling."[3]

Mark speaks three times of the use of ships, Matthew and Luke twice each, giving evidence of their use both for fishing and for passenger service.[4] Since ships were employed there must have been a shipbuilding industry. And happily Josephus gives us some light regarding that fact. In telling of the capture of Taricheae by Titus he says that on the next day after the city was taken Titus "commanded that vessels be fitted up in order to pursue those that escaped in the ships; these vessels were quickly gotten ready accordingly because there was great plenty of materials and a great number of artificers also."[5] Taricheae at least was one city on the shore of Galilee which supplied work for shipbuilders.

1 Matthew 13:45;
2 Ecclus. XXVI, 29ff;
3 Ibid. XXXVII, 11;
4 Mark 4:38, 6:32, 6:47. Matthew 4:22, 14:24. Luke 5:7, 8:22.
5 Wars III, 10.

The baker, as apart from baking in the home, had his shop in Jerusalem. For during the famine of Herod's reign he sent to Egypt for corn, for food and "for those many that were not able, either by reason of their old age, or any other infirmity, to provide food for themselves he (Herod) made this provision for them, that the bakers should make their bread ready for them."[1] The baker is not referred to in the synoptic gospels but he must have been present in every other city in Palestine as well as in Jerusalem.

The use of medicine was implied by Josephus when he spoke of bitumen being used in different kinds of medicine. We cannot say whether the physician and tha apothecary were the same but there were physicians and according to Ecclesiasticus they were held in esteem by the people.

> "Honor a physician according to thy need of him with
> the honors due unto him:
> For verily the Lord hath created him.
> - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
> The skill of the physician shall lift up his head;
> And in the sight of great men he shall be admired.
> The Lord created medicines out of the earth;
> And a prudent man will have no disgust at them.
> - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
> With these will the apothecary make a confection."[2]

Jesus also refers to himself as a physician when criticized for eating with the publicans and the sinners. "He said, they that are whole have no need of a physician but they that are sick."[3] But Mark does not seem to favor physicians so highly or else he thot of the woman with the issue of blood as an incurable case for he says that she "had suffered

1 Ant. XIV, 9.
2 Ecclus. XXXVIII, 1ff.
3 Matthew 9:12.

many things of many physicians and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."[1]

The potter, the weaver, the blacksmith, the engraver are mentioned in Ecclesiasticus, provided we accept the note of explanation for some of the words as given by the translator:

"So is every artificer (engraver) and workmaster (weavor),
That passeth his time by night as by day;
They that cut gravings of signets,
And his dilligence is to make great variety;
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
So is the smith sitting by his anvil,
And considering the unwrought iron:
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
So is the potter sitting at his work,
And turning the wheel about with his feet."[2]

Along with these occupations mentioned in the sources Mackie[3] adds stonecutters, dyers, day laborers and others which were necessary to the village life. These probably were found as he says but the reader is left to judge of their authenticity in the time of Christ with the exception of the day laborer. Our Lord's parable of the householder[4] proves his existence. All who were engaged in any of the occupations referred to in this chapter were producers.

"They shall not be sought for in the council of the people,
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
But they will maintain the fabric of the world."[5]

Government officials and all of those connected with the maintainance of government will be spoken of in the next chapter.

1 Mark 5:26;
2 Ecclus. XXXVIII, 27ff.;
3 Bible Manners and Customs, Chapter IV.
4 Matthew 20:1f.
5 Ecclus. XXXVIII, 32, 34.

COMMERCE. Commerce between peoples entails four factors: highways, means of transportation, a medium of exchange and a demand for the good on one that may be supplied by the other. The highways of the world crossed Palestine in Jesus' day. It was the crossroads of commerce between Europe, Asia and Africa. While the Semitic peoples were not road builders the Persians had begun roadbuilding which the Romans continued. It was the Romans then who were responsible mainly for the improvement and construction of the great highways of the time, especially those of Palestine. There were three great highways from Egypt thru the Holy Land; really four, if we consider the two branches of the coast road. The first highway came out of Egypt and followed along the coast thru Philistia, the Plain of Sharon, Phoenicia, and into Asia Minor; this road branched at or near Joppa. The other branch led along the east of Sharon close to the foot hills of Samaria, north east thru the wady Arak into the Plain of Esdraelon, by Megiddo, across the Plain via Mount Tabor, thence down the plateau to the north west end of the Sea of Galilee and from there north east by Damascus on into Babylonia. A third highway from Egypt entered Palestine via Beersheba, passing north to Hebron, Jerusalem, and Shechem, on thru Central Galilee until it reached the Lebanons; it crossed the Euphrates at Carchemish and turned east thru Mesopotamia via Nineveh to Babylon. The fourth road from Egypt crossed the desert south of the Dead Sea, ran north thru Moab, along the eastern side of Jordan until it joined the Damasucs road south of

the Sea of Galilee. Besides these were the highways connecting the East and the West; a land route thru Asia Minor to Rome, another from the Arabian Desert thru Gilead, western Palestine to Joppa thence by sea to Rome, with many other cross ways that aided commerce.[1]

Transportation was carried on by ships and on land mainly by camel. Altho the camel was the most important means of travel for long journeys thru the desert, the ox, the donkey and the horse were also in common use.[2]

The medium of exchange was gold, silver and copper coin. While the Roman money was really the standard currency according to Schürer, both the Greek and the Hebrew coins were used.[3] "The Palestinian gold coin was the Roman areus of twenty-five denarii," says Schürer but we do not find it mentioned in the New Testament, altho it may be correct, for the current silver coin was the denarius which is mentioned more frequently than any other coin in the Gospels. It is spoken of three times by Matthew, for instance, when the Pharisees had asked Jesus if it was lawful to pay tribute money,"and they brought unto him a denarius."[4] The denarius was equivalent to an attic drachma and calculations were still made by the drachma, tho not so frequently.[5] The only possible reference to the drachma in the Gospels is the parable of the Lost Coin[6] where the piece of silver mentioned

1 Kent, Biblical Geography p. 75f; 5 The Jewish People II, I, p39.
2 Ibid p. 73. 6 Luke 15:8.
3 Schürer, The Jewish People II, I, p. 38f.
4 Matthew 22:19; See also 18:28, 20:2; Mark 6:37, 12:15, 14:5; Luke 7:41, 10:35, 20:24.

is the drachma. But there are three references in Second Maccabees, for example, Jason is sent with three hundred drachmas for sacrifice to Hercules.[1] Josephus speaks of Herod distributing to each of his soldiers in Sepphoris one hundred and fifty drachmas.[2] In addition to these there were three copper coins in circulation. These Kennedy classifies as the assarion, the largest, the quadrans or one-quarter assarion, and the lepton or one-half quadrans. The lepton is spoken of proverbially as the smallest Jewish coin[3]; it is the widow's mite of the Gospels, and is unknown to the Roman system of coinage. These were the coins of the Roman system which were recognized in Palestine under the Roman Empire, and other coins of foreign denominations had to be exchanged for these for trading purposes in the province.

Besides the local trading in the shops and the bazaars of the many villages, towns and cities of Palestine, there was foreign commerce. This was increased, of course, by the numerous caravans constantly passing over the country's highways. What were the objects of this extensive exchange? There were naturally more imports than exports but the exports will be considered first.

George Adam Smith in his article on "Trade and Commerce" in the Encyclopedia Biblica says that pickled fish were exported from the Sea of Galilee as far as Italy and gives as his authority a reference to Strabo.[4] But

1 II Maccabees 4:19; also 10:20, 12:43. 2 Ant. XIV, 15.
3 Kennedy, Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Art. on "Money."
4 Note: Merrill says, "Here fish were prepared and packed, and, it has been inferred with some reason, shipped - - to - cities about the Mediterranean". Galilee p. 41. "Reason" not explained.

Strabo, in so far as we can find, has nothing to say about the exporting of fish at all and certainly nothing in the paragraph cited. It may also have been true that the fish cured at Tarichaeae were exported, and that as far as Italy, but the only allusion that Strabo makes to fish is that "At the place called Tarichaeae, the Lake supplies the best fish for curing." a quotation already used in another connection.[1]

Josephus tells us that "Galilee was very fruitful in oil" which was exported to Syria. John of Gischala was granted "the sole privilege" for exportation and "by sending away great quantities - - - he gathered an immense sum of money together."[2] Strabo, in his description of the Plain of Jericho, emphasizes the growth there of the palm and balsam. He speaks of the balsam being used for headache and dimness of sight and adds, "It bears therefore a high price, especially as it is produced in no other place." He says again that "a large revenue is derived from the palms and balsam."[3] So Smith is undoubtedly correct when he says that this valley "was famed thruout the ancient world for its dates and balsam."[4] In the same connection Smith points out that this was also true of corn and flax. Palestine may have exported wheat to Phoenicia but if so it must have come mainly from east of Jordan. Schürer says, "that Palestine with her abundance of natural products made on her part large contributions to the commerce of the world; the produce of her soil and her industrial commodities

1 p. 24.
2 Wars II, 21.
3 Strabo's Geography XVI, 2, p. 41.
4 Historical Geography p. 487.

went into all lands and were some of them world famed."[1] Schürer also gives the best available classification of the imports into Palestine. He has made an exhaustive study of the subject and while he has used the Mishna, which is of later date, to quite an extent in addition to the other sources the most of the objects mentioned were certainly known in Jesus' time. He classifies the imports in three divisions: provisions, clothing and domestic utensils.[2] Of foreign provisions there are zythos, fish, mustard, kurbis, beans and lentils from Egypt; "Babylonian sauce, Median beer, Edomite vinegar, Cilician groats, Bithynian cheese, Greek pumpkins, Roman hyssop, and Spanish kolias." Examples are also given of other provisions of foreign names such as asparagus, lupines and Persian nuts which show them to have come from abroad. Of foreign clothing there is mention of" Pelusian and Indian linen and cotton fabrics, Cilician haircloth, the handkerchief, the felt hat, the felt socks and sandals," and other articles of foreign names. Domestic utensils of foreign origin were especially plentiful everywhere. He mentions the basket, ladder, and rope from Egypt;"also a Tyrian ladder and Sidonian dishes or bowls." Of Greek and Roman utensils we find the most such as "the bench, the arm chair, the curtain, the mirror, and the Corinthian Candlestick. For eating and drinking, the plate, the bowl and the

1 The Jewish People I, II, p. 41.
2 Ibid, p. 42ff.

tablecloth. Numerous other things are mentioned, among them all kinds of cases of common designation, as well as the box, the wine barrel, the chest, the casket and the sack.

## IV

## THE ECONOMIC CLASSES OF SOCIETY AND THEIR CONFLICTS

In the preceding chapter there have been under consideration conditions which vitally effect human life. Let us now attempt to see the humanity as it existed under those conditions in Palestine. What was the population of the country in Jesus' day? What was its character and its distribution? When these questions have been dealt with then the people will be classified in order to show the economic strata of society. This, of course, will involve the various political and ecclesiastical institutions in addition to those referred to in the foregoing chapter. And, finally, we shall observe the lack of harmony between classes, either manifest or obscure, and seek some of the causes of such conflict, or seed for conflict, in terms of personal values.

There is no trustworthy estimate of the population of Palestine at the time under consideration. Some scholars discuss the question at length, others mention it, regret the lack of any definite reliable knowledge and let the matter rest. There is more discussion of the population of Galilee than of the whole of Palestinebecause of the statement made by Josephus. He says in his "Life" that there were two hundred and four cities and villages in Galilee and in another place he says that "moreover the cities lie here very thick, and the very many villages everywhere are so full of people by the richness of the

soil that the very least of them contain about 15,000 inhabitants."[1] Merrill says that Josephus is no doubt correct in these figures and gives his estimate of the population of Galilee alone as upwards of three million.[2] But Masterman shows conclusively that such an estimate is absurd and declares that Galilee could not possibly have had a population of more than 400,000.[3] Schürer states that during the Greek and Roman period the population of Palestine "experienced great fluctuations" and gives no estimate.[4] In his article on Palestine in the Encyclopedia Biblica Professor Socin gives the estimate of the entire country's population as two and one-half millions. He says that the population at present is 650,000 and could never have been more than four times that figure in its most flourishing times. With Masterman's discussion of Galilee in mind it would be as well to accept the conjecture of Professor Socin as any other.

The character of the population was primarily Jewish. This fact was due to the rule of the Maccabees, who saved the country from Hellenization and under one of whom, Alexander Janneus, the restored Jewish kingdom reached its greatest extension. This Jewish characteristic of the population was especially true of Judea, less so of Galilee but both Galilee and the cities of Jamnia and Joppa on the coast had a Jewish majority. The remaining sections of the country had been more or less Hellenized but Judea and Galilee, altho influenced by Hellenism, still held their Jewish identity. The people dwent in cities and

1 Wars III, 3.
2 Galilee p. 13.
3 Studies p. 134.
4 The Jewish People II, I, p. 1.

villages. These were numerous whereever the land was arable. Farmer or shepherd, altho his work was in the open field, had his home in the neighboring billage or city. There were no homes in the open country.

Society during this period may be divided, from the economic point of view, into four classes: the governing class which includes both political and ecclesiastical rulers, the commercial class, the industrial class which, because of slight development of the ordinary industries outside the home, includes the farmer, and the shepherd, and the poor class. Upon the victory of the Seleucidae in 198 B. C. Palestine was made a part of the Syrian kingdom. The weakening of the Seleucidae near the end of the second century allowed the Jews the opportunity to obtain their freedom. This was enjoyed until the coming of Pompey when Palestine came under the power of the Roman Empire. So during the time of Jesus, or from about 63 B. C. to 70 A. D., Palestine, though governed locally by the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews, was subject to Roman authority. Kings approved by the Roman Senate were the political rulers until 6 A. D. when Palestine became a Roman Province. Procurators or governors were the chief authority during the remainder of the period.

The Romans freed the Jewish cities and allowed each a municipal constitution. But they were compelled to pay tribute and as a constant reminder a garrison of Roman soldiers were placed in each city. The Emperor

assessed a certain amount for each province or territory and the king or governor was responsible for its collection. Thus Cassius exacted 700 talents of Judea.[1] The local ruler of the province could "farm" out these taxes to taxgatherers adding enough to them for their own maintenance which included palace, retinue of servants, and sufficient for whatever else was desired. Herod the Great is the best example of these local rulers. These taxgatherers in turn assessed the people and, judging from the example of Zaccheus, no doubt is left in our minds that they received due compensation.

With this large body of economic non-producers may be classed the local Jewish governing group whose pecuniary demands were equally oppressive, if not more so, than those of the political group. This company was headed by the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews. This body, made up of seventy-one of the chief rulers, sat at Jerusalem and governed the district of Judea under the Mosaic law. It also held more or less authority over all other Jews both in foreign countries and in the remainder of Palestine. Just as each city had its political representative for gathering the revenues so each city had its elders, numbering from seven to twenty-three depending upon its size, for the administration of the Jewish law. It is possible that at least a number of these elders may have been priests since the priests were divided into twenty-four courses and lived in all

1 Josephus, Ant. XIV, 11.

parts of Palestine. If such was the case these priests could continually remind the people of their districts of the numerous emoluments required under the law. These emoluments which the priests received from the people were more deadening in their effect than the government taxes. They were brought by the people as offerings to Jehovah and it was believed that devine approval was secured in proportion to punctuality. When we consider the vast portions claimed by the priests we can well appreciate the woes which Jesus prescribed for the"Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites." Schürer enumerates these offerings and gifts in detail.[1] We shall mention only a few under his classification to show the extent. First there were the offerings to Jehovah - the sin offering, the trespass offering, the meat offering, the thank offering, the burnt offerings and the twelve cakes of shew bread. The priests received all of the sin offering and a choice share of each of the others. In the second place the bulk of the maintenance of the priesthood was derived from "dues that were paid independently of the sacrifices altogether." These dues took the form of a genuine tax consisting of the first fruits of the "seven" principle products of the soil, and the tithe, which was deducted after the first two deductions had been made; this included "even the most insignificant and worthless objects such as the mint, anise, and cummin."[2] And finally from the products of the soil one-twenty-fourth of all the dough kneaded

1 The Jewish People II, I, p. 230ff.
2 Ibid p. 239; Matthew 23:23.

by the individual and one-forty-eighth of that kneaded by the public baker. Besides the products of the soil the maintenance tax took heavy toll from those who raised cattle. The male first born was required if clean, and if unclean it must be ransomed by any price set by the priest with one-fifth added. Even the male first born of man at a month old had to be ransomed by five shekels. Of all flesh slaughtered the shoulder, the two cheeks and the stomach went as maintenance tax. A portion of the proceeds of the sheep shearing was required of all families having two or more sheep according to the school of Shammai or five or more according to the Hillel school. There were also extraordinary gifts and offerings such as votive offerings in which a person might dedicate himself to the sanctuary, fifty shekels for a man and thirty for a woman. All of these with numerous others went for the maintenance of the priests primarily. Nor were these all. There were yet the moneys for defraying the expenses of public worship. For this purpose every male of twenty years or over was taxed one-half shekel, to be paid in the month Adar, everyone must furnish "so much wood"[1] for the altar and in the treasury were placed thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes, six of which were for freewill and voluntary offerings. When we consider this extensive and complicated system of taxation by the priestly class and then, for example, review the building program carried out by Herod the Great in addition to all of his other extravagances we get some idea of the magnitude of

1 The Jewish People II, I, p. 251.

the financial burdens of the people among whom Jesus lived.

The commercial class included all of those who engaged in foreign trade. Heord himself was among them as Josephus discloses in showing Herod importing food and seed for the famished people of Judea.[1] Again John of Gischala was given a monopoly on oil by means of which he made a great deal of money that he used against his benefactor. These are examples that give evidence of the type of men who handled the goods which Schürer mentions as shipped into Palestine. The statement of George Adam Smith that "In Moab corn dealers from Jerusalem buy up the harvests before they are reaped"[2] may also throw some light upon the type of this class in Jesus' day. It was no doubt this class of whom James speaks as coming into the synagogue "with a gold ring" and wearing "fine clothing".[3] It was no doubt one of this class whom Jesus pictures: "Now there was a certain rich man and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptously every day."[4]

"The people" constitute the third economic group in the society of Palestine. These are they of whom Mark speaks when he says, "and the common people heard him gladly".[5] As may be inferred this class embraces all who are engaged with hand or brain in honest work - the producers, The farmer, the weaver, who in this case was usually the housewife, the baker, the smith, the potter,

1 Ant. XV, 9.
2 Jerusalem Vol. I, p. 315.
3 James 2:2f.
4 Luke 16:19.
5 Mark 12:37.

the carpenter and all of the rest who make up the back bone of every civilization. It is this class who is exploited most by the upper Four Hundred. It is this group who does most for the needy and unfortunate class below them. Because at that the capitalists were, for the most part, found in the two classes already mentioned we call this group, including the farmer, the Industrial Class.

The fourth division in the society scale is the poor. They are the "fatherless and the widow"[1] mentioned by James, the "certain poor widow"[2], blind Bartimaeus who sat by the highway near Jericho begging,[3] and other unfortunates of like character. In addition to these were the slaves, the most of whom were those who had "waxen poor" and sold themselves to their debtors.[4] And a third group, similar to them who sold themselves, was made up of them who were dissatisfied with the oppression of the ones above them but who refused to sell themselves. This division Driver calls "Ani", and it includes all who are "bowed down from external circumstances."[5] It is not necessary to dwell upon the first class referred to for they are those of whom Jesus said "Ye have with you always."[6] The ones who had sold themselves into slavery were, in some respects, in better circumstances than before. The Jewish law provided that such should not be required "to serve as a

1 James 1:27. 4 See Leviticus 25:39.
2 Mark 12:42. 5 Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Art."Poor".
3 Ibid 10:46. 6 Mark 14:7.

bondservant but as a hired servant,"[1] and Abelson says that according to the law slaves must be accorded the same home comforts as their masters.[2] This is also borne out by Ecclesiasticus,

"If thou hast a servant, treat him as thyself."[3]

Whenever there is injustice there is rebellion either smoldering in the mind of man or manifesting itself in open violence. It might be said that there was injustice in Jesus' day because there has never been a time in history when it was not manifest. But we are not left without evidence of its existence. Some might say that these disturbances were due to political or religious causes. It is true that these elements did enter in but after carefully going thru all of the available sources we must maintain that in the majority of instances uprisings among the people were due to economic oppression and this fact is borne out in the thot of the time. It may also be said further that the open conflict came usually between the "Ani", or "poor party", according to Driver, and the upper classes of society. It only remains for us to cite some of the evidence to show that this is true. The first reference will be taken from Ecclesiasticus.

"My son, deprive not the poor of his living,
And make not the needy eyes to wait long."[4]

"What peace is there between the hyena and the dog?
And what peace between the rich man and the poor?
Wild asses are the prey of lions in the wilderness;
So poor men are pasture for the rich."[5]

1 Leviticus 25:39-40.
2 Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Art."Slavery."
3 Ecclus. XXXIII, 32.
4 Ibid. IV, I.
5 Ecclus. XIII, 18f.

"The bread of the needy is the life of the poor:
He that depriveth him thereof is a man of blood."[1]

There are many other passages to be found here as well as these in the Book of Enoch:

"And after that there shall be another, the eighth week,
that of righteousness,
And a sword shall be given to it that a righteous judgement
may be executed on the oppressors."[2]

Then follow numerous woes:

"Woe to those who build unrighteousness and oppression".[3]

"Woe to you who devour the finest of the wheat,
And drink wine in large bowls,
And tread under foot the lowly with your might."[4]

"Woe to you who make deceitful and false measures."[5]

"Woe to you who build your houses thru the grievous
toil of others."[6]

Appeal was made to the rulers but they helped the oppressors rather than those who were oppressed:

"And we complained to the rulers in our tribulation,
And cried out against those who devoured us,
But they did not attend to our cries,
And would not hearken to our voice."[7]

"And they helped those who robbed us and those who made us few; and they concealed their oppression, and they did not remove from us the yoke of those that devoured us and dispersed us and murdered us, and they concealed their murder, and remembered not that they had lifted up their hands against us."[8]

Altho this is apocryphal it is evidence of what was in the minds of the people. Furthermore it is borne out in the Gospels: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full for ye shall

1 Ecclus. XXXIV, 21.
2 Enoch 91:12. 3 Ibid 94:6. 4 Ibid 96:5. 5 Ibid 99:12.
6 Ibid 99:13. 7&8 Ibid 103:14ff.

hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep."[1] "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."[2] "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith."[3] These refer to the priestly tactics but one of the parables of the kingdom, altho it illustrates a forgiving spirit, shows that Jesus was also acquainted with the royal oppression of his time. A certain king began to reckon with his servants when "one was brought unto him that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."[4] Other like references might be cited from Josephus but we shall turn to him for evidence of open violence. Notice first the "consternation and disorder" among the Jews caused by the requirements made by Cassius when he came into Syria after the death of Caesar. "And he chiefly oppressed Judea, and exacted of it seven hundred talents."[5] Violent conflict was avoided only by the good offices of Antipater. To prevent Cassius from killing Malichus he gave him one hundred talents. Even then Cassius reduced four cities to slavery and sold

1 Luke 6:24-25.
2 Matthew 23:14.
3 Matthew 23:23.
4 Matthew 18:23f.
5 Ant. XIV, 11.

as slaves the curators and citizens of several others. A second instance of conflict that shows the injustice of the time was Herod's war against the robbers in Galilee. There was a great number of these robbers and they dwelt in caves. The number is shown in their boldness to sally forth against Herod's whole army near Arbela. They were driven back however and repaired to their cave strongholds east of Jordan. Herod later went against them in their caves but because of their inaccessibility he devised chests in which he let down his men from above the mouths of the caves and drew out the robbers by means of hooks and slew many of them, throwing their bodies down the precipice. But surely this was no ordinary band of thieves for there were too many of them! The reason for their revolt is given in the act of one old man. When Herod proclaimed pardon for all who should deliver themselves up to him this old man stood at the mouth of the cave and slew his wife and each of his seven children; at the same time he reproached Herod for the meanness of his family and then threw himself down the precipice preferring to "undergo death rather than slavery."[1] While these took place in the third and fourth decade B. C. Jesus was no doubt familiar with them as well as the many opprobrious atrocities which occurred during the long reign of Herod. Since Jesus was born about the time of Herod's death all the years of his life were characterized by more or less

1 Ant. XIV, 15.

turbulence and insurrection among his people. In fact he himself was the victim of the circumstances of his time.

Archelaus ruled in Judea following the death of his father. Before he had been confirmed by the Roman senate the Jews came up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover. Thinking that the only way to preserve the government was to cut off them opposed to it Archelaus had eight thousand slain. The remainder fled to the mountains. This was only the beginning for Josephus says, "at this time there were ten thousand other disorders which were like tumults because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture, either out of hopes of gain to themselves or out of enmity to the Jews."[1] He describes several of these in detail, Simon in Perea, two thousand of Herod's veteran soldiers in Idumea, Athrongeus, the shepherd, and Judas of Galilee. It is necessary here to speak of only one for they all grew out of a desire to evade external oppression in some form or other, therefore all were Ani. Judas of Galilee was the son of the famous robber, Hesekias, who had been subdued by Herod. This Judas got together a great multitude about Sepphoris, the largest city in Galilee, broke open the place where the royal armor was stored, armed those about him, carried away what money he could find, "and attacked those that were so earnest to get the dominion."[2] It may also have been this same Judas of Gamala, who, with Sadduc, attempted

1 Ant. XVII, 10. 2 Ant. XVII, 11; Wars II, 4.

a revolt against the taxation imposed. They said that this taxation was no better than an introduction into slavery and taught the people what Josephus terms a new system of philosophy. In modern terms this philosophy might be stated in the maxim that "God helps them who help themselves."[1]

An attempt has been made in this chapter to classify the population of Palestine, and to point out something of the grievous exploitation thru taxation and offerings required by the governing class. Reference has been made to the wealth of the commercial class, which was gained in the main by speculation or by excessive profits, and to the great producing or industrial class which was, for the most part, the one exploited. Because the industries in Palestine had not reached such proportions as elsewhere the farmer and the cattle man were included in this class with "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water." Finally we have quoted evidence of economic oppression from the thot of the time and concluded with examples of open violence against such oppression.

1 Ant. XVIII, 1.

# V

## CONCLUSION

The economic situation in Jesus' day has been carefully studied in the light of the available sources. But this thesis is not complete until some conclusion has been reached regarding its effect upon Jesus himself. Therefore the aim of this closing chapter is to observe this effect upon Jesus as shown by his teachings. Dr. Ernest F. Scott, in his book "The Ethical Teachings of Jesus," says, "For our knowledge of Jesus' teachings we are dependent almost solely on the New Testament." He continues, "It is true that a number of sayings has come to us from other sources, but their authenticity is never free from doubt."[1] And since the first three Gospels are considered the most authentic of the sources in the New Testament our consideration will be further limited to this section of its teachings.

As Jesus mingled with the people of his time he was not oblivious to the causes of their class consciousness. He observed, as Dr. McCown points out, that this "class consciousness" was "born of ethical and religious as well as social differences."[2] But since we are now interested only in the social or economic view point the effect of these differences upon Jesus must be discovered in his attitude toward the groups of rich and of Ani.

1 p. 1.
2 The Promise of His Coming, p. 121.

Mark has but three significant instances. It is mainly in Matthew and Luke that reference is made to the classes in question and Luke may be considered the social gospel of the New Testament. Therefore with Luke as a basis references will be pointed out and, whenever present, notice taken of their parallel passages in Matthew and Mark.

In the fourth chapter of Luke Jesus is represented as going into the synagogue at Nazareth. He had "delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he annointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. - - -

And he began to say unto them, today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."[1] It is quite clear in this passage that his compassion is for them who are oppressed. "They" cast him forth out of the city, missing entirely the great truth that he was giving them. While Matthew and Mark do not quote the scripture from Isaiah they do verify his visit to the synagogue, and the offence at his teaching.[2]

The beatitudes are next referred to by Luke.[3] Instead of all blessings as in Matthew, Luke has four blessings and four woes. Luke, no doubt, more nearly uses the words of Jesus. He begins with "Blessed are ye poor,

1 Luke 4:17f. 2. Matthew 13:54f; Mark 6:2f.
3 Thruout the discussion of these scriptural passages Peake's Commentary on the Bible has been consulted freely.

for yours is the kingdom of God."[1] In place of the fifth blessing in Matthew[2] Luke begins his woes with "Woe unto you that are rich!"[3] The three other woes are applied to the wealthy class as against the preceding blessings which applied to the poor. Altho we are using Luke's Gospel as the basis of this discussion it must be pointed out that the first blessing of Matthew, "Blessed are the poor in spirit,"[4] compares more nearly with Driver's "poor party" and may, in this respect, show the broader meaning better than does Luke, but Luke's version makes it evident that Jesus again, in this instance, favors the poor and scores the rich.

When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if it was he that should come or if they should look for another, in his reply Jesus verified the fulfillment of the prophecy which he had read previously from Isaiah: "Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good tidings preached to them."[5] Omitted by Mark this passage is identical with its parallel in Matthew.[6] No reference is made here to the rich.

Luke alone has Jesus make a direct statement in regard to economics. One of the multitude asked Jesus to bid his brother divide his inheritance with him. After

1 Luke 6:20. 3 Luke 6:24. 5 Luke 7:22.
2 Matthew 5:7. 4 Matthew 5:3. 6 Matthew 11:5.

Jesus had made it plain that he was neither a judge nor a divider he said, "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth."[1] This statement he followed with the parable of a certain rich man whose soul was required because he built new barns for his increase. Here is added evidence showing Jesus' favoring attitude toward the poor. This time he seems to infer, at least, that the rich man was taken merely because he was a rich man. Or does it imply that he oppressed his laborers. This passage is peculiar to Luke.

Another passage peculiar to Luke is the account of the time when Jesus went into the house to dine with one of the rulers of the Pharisees. When he had healed a man with the dropsy and had spoken a parable regarding them who took the chief seats he turned to his host and said, "When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors." - - - but rather "When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind."[2] Here the Pharisee is classed with his "rich neighbor", which only reminds us again of how he obtains his wealth thru the oppressive tithes and taxes taken from the poor, even to the devouring of "widows' houses". This last phrase is found in Mark[3] and Matthew[4] if we accept the authorized version; it is omitted in the revised. Luke also

1 Luke 12:13f.
2 Ibid. 14:1-24.
3 Mark 12:40
4 Matthew 23:14.

speaks of the Pharisees "who were lovers of money." Altho not parallel passages, the fact that the same attitude is shown toward the Pharisees by each of the gospels verifies our assertion that Jesus felt the same toward the Pharisees as he did toward others who gained their wealth by oppression and used it selfishly.

Common to Mark and Luke is the incident where Jesus "looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, of a truth I say unto you the poor widow cast in more than they all."[1] Another instance which shows the attitude of Jesus is that of the rich man and Lazarus, in the sixteenth of Luke, where Lazarus, a beggar, lying at the gate of the rich man desired crumbs from his table. They both died. Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom while the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hades.[2] Zaccheus, a rich publican of Jericho, climbed a tree to see Jesus. He was called to come down, and Jesus dined with him. Salvation came to his house that day. This is the first and only instance which we find among the incidents according to Luke where a rich man is received with favor by Jesus and here Zaccheus gave half his goods to the poor besides restoring fourfold any wrong exactions of taxes. He used his wealth unselfishly; he made it secondary and thus received salvation.[3] "The

1 Luke 21:1-2; see also Mark 12:41-42.
2 Ibid. 16:20.
3 Ibid. 19:1-10.

great refusal" and the comments made thereon give perhaps the best example of what Jesus thot concerning wealth. This is an important instance, too, because it is related by all three of the gospels. "A certain ruler," Luke says, "asked him saying, Good Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus then asked him if he had kept the commandments. All of them he had kept from his youth. "One thing thou lackest," said Jesus, "sell all that thou hast and distribute to the poor - - - But when he heard these things he was exceeding sorrowful for he was very rich."[1] Or as Mark and Matthew have it, "And he went away sorrowful."[2] But the significant thing here is Jesus' comment: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to enter in thru a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."[3] The minor differences of the parallel passages need not be further pointed out except to see just what Jesus meant. It makes no difference whether the young man was "one" or a "certain ruler" since he was rich. So emphatic must have been Jesus' comment that it startled his hearers. "Then who can be saved?" They were astonished by the requirement that the young man must sell all that he had. This is evidenced by Peter's remark in verse twenty-eight, "Lo we have left our own and followed thee." But Jesus did not say that a rich man could not be saved, neither did he mean that every one must sell all that he had in order to

1 Luke 18:18-23
2 Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-30.
3 Luke 18:24-25.

enter the kingdom. Yet it would have been necessary in this instance because this young man valued his wealth more than the kingdom. All the teachings of Jesus are accounts of how he handled particular situations. In this case his hearers seemed to get the conception that a man cannot enter the kingdom at all if he is rich. Their interpretation was wrong. This is shown by two outstanding examples, the first that of Zaccheus of Jericho mentioned above, and the other that of Joseph of Arimathea who, according to Matthew, buried the body of Jesus. "And when even was come there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was Jesus' disciple."[1]

The chief concern of Jesus was human life. Everything else was secondary, important only for its use in the development of life. At the age of twelve Jesus went to Jerusalem and perhaps every year after until his crucifixion. He observed the character of the hill country of Judea, how hardly nature brot forth her fruitage and nourished it on her rugged breast. He spent forty days in her wilderness of barren wastes and ever afterwards the strength of the hills was his for "he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."[2] He observed the lilies in Galilee, the grass of the field, the birds of the air, and was not anxious about his living, for if his Heavenly Father cared for them He also knew Jesus' needs. So why should he be of doubtful mind?[3] He mingled with

1 Matthew 27:57. 2 Mark 1:22.
3 Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 6:25-33.

all classes of men. He ate with the Pharisee and the leper.[1] He touched shoulders with the publican and with the poor widow. He was neither a reformer nor a revolutionist. He believed in no Utopias for he recognized the inequalities of men.[2] That they have unequal gifts he shows in the parable of the talents, and he gave "to each according to his ability."[3] Even if the rich is warned to give up his wealth, it is just as dangerous to be slothful. While the one "lifts up his eyes in Hades" the other is "cast into outer darkness."[4] Jesus saw the men of his day at their work; the judge in his seat,[5] the merchant in his shop, the farmer sowing his seed, and the fisherman with his net. He saw the unrighteousness which existed because of the oppression of one class by another.

So he began to preach the kingdom of God which means simply the realization of the true value of the life of man in the heart of every individual. "For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"[6] And he preached the righteousness of God which means that every man, because he realizes the worth of human life, seeks his summum bonum in providing, in so far as he is able, equal opportunity for the self realization of every other person.[7] "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."[8]

1 Mark 14:3. 2 Griffith-Jones, E., The Economics of Jesus. 3 Matthew 25:15. 4 Matthew 25:30; Luke 19;27. 5 Luke 18:2. 6 Ibid. 16:26. 7 Parable of Pounds, Luke 19:11-23; and of Householder, Matthew 20:1-16. 8 Matthew 6:33.

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